# Appendix 3

# PRE-PROCEEDINGS LETTER

**PLEASE DO NOT IGNORE THIS LETTER**

**TAKE IT TO A SOLICITOR NOW**

**Date: [ ]**

Dear

**Re: [Insert name of Local Authority] CONCERNS ABOUT [insert name(s) of child(ren) –**

**LETTER BEFORE PROCEEDINGS / NOTICE OF INTENTION TO ISSUE**

**THE CONCERNS REGARDING YOUR CHILD MEAN THAT WE ARE GOING TO COURT/WE ARE CONSIDERING GOING TO COURT**

I am writing to let you know how concerned *[name of LA]* have become about your care of your child/ren. I am writing to tell you that [*name of the Local Authority]* are starting Care proceedings/considering starting care proceedings in respect of *[name(s) of child(ren)]*. The Court could decide that this is best for him/her/them to be taken into care.

We have set out in this letter the concerns that we have about *[name(s) of child(ren)]* and the things that have been done to try to help your family.

AN IMPORTANT MEETING ABOUT WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT

Please come to a meeting with us to talk about these concerns on *[date and time]* at the *[insert name of office]*. The address is *[address]* and there is a map with this letter to help you find it. Please contact your social worker on *[tel. no.]* to tell us if you will come to the meeting.

At the meeting we will discuss with you and tell you what you will need to do to make your child safe. We will also talk to you about how we will support you to do this. We will also make clear what steps we will take if we continue to be worried *[name(s) of child(ren)].*

PLEASE BRING A SOLICITOR TO THE MEETING ON *[insert date]*

**Take this letter to a solicitor and ask them to come to the meeting with you. The solicitor will advise you about getting legal aid (free legal advice). We have sent with this letter a list of local solicitors who work with children and families. They are all separate from children’s services. You do not have to bring a solicitor to the meeting, but it will be helpful if you do.**

|  |
| --- |
| Local Authority Legal Contact:(Name, Address & Telephone) |

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF YOU DO NOTHING

If you do not answer this letter or come to the meeting, we will go to Court as soon as we can to make sure *[name(s) of child(ren)]* are safe.

YOUR WIDER FAMILY

Our concerns about *[name(s) of child[ren)]* are very serious. If the Court decides you cannot care for your children, we will first try and place them with one of your relatives, if it is best for your child to do this. At the meeting we will want to talk to you and your solicitor about who might look after your child if the Court decides that it is no longer safe for you to do so.

We look forward to seeing you at the meeting with your solicitor on [date[. If you do not understand any part of this letter, please contact your social worker [name] on [tel. no.]. Please tell your social worker if you need any help with child care or transport arrangements in order to come to the meeting, and we will try to help.

Yours sincerely

*[name]*

Team Manager

Local Office/service

cc: Social Worker [name]

 Local Authority In-house Legal Team

Enc: Map of office

 List of Law Society Children Panel Solicitors

 List of things we are worried about

**PLEASE SHOW / TAKE THIS TO A SOLICITOR**

**HERE ARE THE MAIN THINGS THAT WE ARE WORRIED ABOUT:**

**1. [Outline concern and give examples of when this happened. This should capture ongoing concerns as well as acute episodes/incidents]**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Date(s)** | **Problem** |
|  |  |
|  |  |

2.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Date(s)** | **Problem** |
|  |  |

WHAT CHILDREN’S SERVICES HAVE DONE TO TRY TO HELP

|  |
| --- |
| [Who?] [What help has been given?] [When?] |

WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO:

1. Confirm that you will come to a meeting to talk about these concerns. Please try to bring a solicitor with you.

2. Continue to see and work with your social worker ***[insert name]*** and allow him/her to see **[name(s) of child(ren)].**

3. At the meeting we will talk to you about how ***[name(s) of child(ren)]*** will be kept safe, with your help.

**Set out further steps parent need to take here if appropriate, eg. engage with Family Aide assessment, engage with other agencies, come to a review pre-proceedings meeting**